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ABSTRACT

This report presents policies to enhance academic preparation and progress, assist needy students, and keep college costs affordable in Illinois, and indicates the implementation status of these policies. These policies are designed to heighten awareness among students and families of the effect of academic preparation and sustained academic progress on educational costs and college success; to increase cooperation and coordination among schools and colleges to strengthen academic preparation; to expand opportunities available to high school students and nontraditional students to receive college credit; to reduce institutional barriers to timely degree completion; to expand opportunities available to students who can benefit from accelerated programs; to provide educational opportunities to all residents of the state, irrespective of their financial status; to make a wide range of educational opportunities available to residents of the state; to foster participation in and reduce barriers to higher education; to assist students and families in planning and saving to meet higher education costs; and to ensure that family decisions about tuition and fees are included in planning and budget development. Recommendations, implementation status, and planned initiatives for these policies are included. (MDM)

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ED 422 754

Item #2C
July 7, 1998

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

CURRENT AFFORDABILITY POLICIES: STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The report of the Committee to Study Affordability, adopted by the Board of Higher Education in November 1994 and subsequently by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, included policy recommendations to enhance academic preparation and progress, assist needy students, and keep college costs affordable. This item presents a listing of these affordability policies, and indicates for each the status of its implementation and planned implementation initiatives.

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STUDENT AFFORDABILITY

ENHANCING ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND LOWERING COLLEGE COSTS

Statewide objectives for strengthening academic preparation for college and promoting collegiate academic progress in order to improve college affordability are:

- to heighten awareness among students and families at elementary, middle, and high schools concerning the effect of academic preparation and sustained academic progress on educational costs and college success;
- to increase cooperation and coordination among schools, colleges, and universities to strengthen academic preparation;
- to expand opportunities available to high school students and nontraditional students to receive college credit;
- to reduce institutional barriers to timely degree completion; and
- to expand opportunities available to college students who can benefit from accelerated programs, as well as to students who must extend their studies beyond traditional time frames.

Recommendations, Implementation Status, and Planned Initiatives

1. Colleges, universities, and their governing boards and the Board of Higher Education, working with schools and other education agencies, should ensure that students and their families are aware that pursuing strong academic preparation and participating in accelerated programs in high school can reduce college costs, while poor preparation often results in greater expenditure of students' time and financial resources.

⇒ Minimum high school course requirements for admission to Illinois public colleges and universities, implemented in 1993, have had an effect. More high school students are taking more college-preparatory courses. According to American College Testing (ACT), 47 percent of the ACT test-takers reported taking a college-preparatory core compared to 16 percent in 1986. While this represents a substantial increase, still only half of the ACT test-takers, presumably all of whom intend to go to college, completed the courses that colleges and universities expect of entering freshmen.

⇒ Seven percent of public university students and 14 percent of community college students required remedial courses in 1996. While less than the national average, the proportion of students needing remediation increased during the last decade. At least some of this increase is related to the adoption of minimum admission requirements that redefined intermediate algebra as remedial rather than college level.

⇒ A November 1998 report on the Priorities, Quality and Productivity initiative will provide analysis, identify exemplary practices, and suggest next steps in improving academic preparation for college and reducing the need for remediation. This report will be based on information provided by public universities and community colleges in their 1998 Productivity Reports, which will provide information on remedial education, including how programs and students needing remedial/developmental instruction are monitored and assessed, and how well programs are matched to the characteristics of students.

2. Schools should ensure that students are informed of the high school coursework that is required for college admission. High schools should disseminate to students and their families information about the success of their graduates in college.

⇒ The *Illinois Learning Standards*, adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education in July 1997, will serve as the basis for a new Prairie State examination which will assess students' achievement in English, mathematics, science, social science, fine arts, and foreign languages. The implementation of the standards and assessment of achievement could have a substantial impact on the preparation of students for college.

⇒ High schools throughout the state continue to receive annually a report about the success of their graduates who entered Illinois public universities. At the present time, each school decides how that information will be used and distributed.

3. Education at all levels should expand opportunities for high school students to improve their academic preparation and, if appropriate, to enroll in courses for college credit while in high school.

⇒ The higher education telecommunications initiative has expanded opportunities for colleges and universities to provide advanced courses to high school students. The statewide video network will link 116 high school sites to participating community colleges, public universities, and independent colleges and universities. During the last year, Waubonsee Community College, a leader in technology-delivered instruction, provided 35 hours of interactive video instruction for high schools weekly.

⇒ Advanced placement courses provide opportunities for high school students to pursue college-level work and Advanced Placement (AP) examinations help them earn college credit. Between 1987 and 1997, the number of Illinois students taking AP tests nearly doubled. About 13 percent of the high school graduating class of 1997 took advantage of AP opportunities.

⇒ A November 1998 report on the Priorities, Quality and Productivity initiative will provide analysis, identify exemplary practices, and suggest next steps toward eliminating barriers to timely degree completion based on information provided by colleges and universities on steps taken to increase assistance to high school students to improve their preparation for college; to increase credit awarded for Advanced Placement courses and to expand Advanced Placement opportunities in high schools; and to increase opportunities for high school students to earn college credit.

4. The Board of Higher Education shall work with other education agencies to identify any rules, regulations, or other barriers that inhibit students from taking courses for college credit while in high school.

⇒ The Illinois Community College Board has worked with the Illinois State Board of Education to remove regulatory barriers to offering courses for college credit to high school students. Questions about dual credit (accepting a single course as meeting both high school graduation and college degree requirements) and other concerns still need to be addressed. A related issue is that college and university faculties are not considered qualified to teach high school courses without teacher certification.

5. High schools, colleges, and universities should ensure that high school and entering college students and their families are aware of the need to plan, both academically and financially, to meet the total educational costs of their college educations. Colleges and universities should provide planning materials and develop computerized scheduling and curriculum monitoring systems to aid students in planning their academic programs over a multi-year period.

⇒ Colleges and universities work extensively with high schools to provide information about college. As competition for students increased in the last decade, these efforts have increased. For college-bound high school students a considerable amount of information is generally available through publications, college fairs, and, more recently, Internet-based information systems.

⇒ The Illinois Student Assistance Commission's Internet site, *ISAC INFO Café*, provides information on all aspects of student financial aid, academic preparation, college selection, admission, and planning for college costs. On-line calculators allow students to determine their projected total educational costs, possible financial aid, expected family contribution, and savings required. Higher EdNet, launched in 1996, and an array of printed materials are provided by ISAC to assist students in planning both academically and financially.

6. Each college and university should inform a potential student about his or her likelihood of success and the programs and services available. Students and their families should be advised about the importance of making appropriate choices among institutions and programs.

⇒ As described in the July 1998 report, *An Internet-Based Higher Education Consumer Information System*, a plan has been developed to implement a consumer information system. Eventually, this system will provide comparative information about colleges and universities that will address some of the questions most commonly asked by students.

7. Colleges and universities should eliminate barriers to timely degree completion and make improvements in academic calendars, curriculum requirements, and course scheduling and sequencing, as needed, to facilitate timely degree completion. Institutions should seek to accommodate student changes in academic programs so that students changing majors, particularly in their freshmen and sophomore years, can complete their majors without prolonging their time-to-degree.

⇒ November 1998 report on the Priorities, Quality and Productivity initiative will provide analysis, identify exemplary practices, and suggest next steps toward eliminating barriers to timely degree completion. Colleges and universities will address these issues as a special focus topic in their Priorities, Quality, and Productivity reports during 1997-98. In Productivity Reports to be submitted in August 1998, each college and university will

address questions about opportunities to earn college credit for non-collegiate learning experiences; reducing barriers and promoting timely achievement of educational objectives; and promoting persistence and academic progress among students who must attend part time, interrupt their education, or return to college after long absences.

⇒ The 1998 Productivity report will also address whether academic calendars, course schedules, and curricula allow students to advance toward their educational objectives in a timely manner.

8. Colleges and universities should provide opportunities for students to accelerate degree completion, publicize these opportunities, and facilitate the efforts of students who seek to take advantage of them. Colleges and universities should establish programs that permit students to complete a baccalaureate program in less than four years.

⇒ Western Illinois University's GRADTRAC program, which starts fall 1998, guarantees that a student can earn a degree in most WIU programs in four years. If a student fails to graduate in four years because required courses were not available, the University will pay tuition for classes needed to graduate.

⇒ The 1998 Productivity reports from public universities will discuss steps that have been taken to use institutional facilities and resources more effectively on a year-round basis.

9. College and university efforts to accelerate degree completion should address the needs of African-American and Hispanic, adult, and place-bound students, and any other student groups that historically have taken longer to complete their undergraduate degrees. Colleges and universities should also facilitate the academic progress of students enrolled in remedial programs, and cooperatively develop programs for students enrolled in remedial programs at community colleges who intend to transfer to a four-year institution to complete their baccalaureate degrees.

⇒ As noted above, colleges and universities have been asked to address remediation and timely degree completion for both traditional and nontraditional students in 1998 Productivity Reports.

10. The Illinois Board of Higher Education shall monitor, evaluate, and periodically report the results of efforts to improve precollegiate preparation and college academic progress. The Board should also make budget recommendations to further enhance precollege preparation and college academic progress.

⇒ The Board works with the Illinois Community College Board and colleges and universities to maintain three information systems: high school feedback, shared enrollment and graduation, and baccalaureate follow-up. Periodic reports address preparation and success in first-year college work, persistence and time-to-degree, graduation rates, and graduates' satisfaction and post-baccalaureate careers. The systems are being revised and updated to accommodate new information needs and new technologies.

ASSISTING NEEDY STUDENTS

Statewide objectives for student financial aid are:

- to provide educational opportunities to all residents of the state irrespective of their financial status; and

- to make a wide range of educational opportunities available to residents of the state, recognizing the diversity of student goals, educational programs, and institutions.

Recommendations, Implementation Status, and Planned Initiatives

1. State financial aid should be distributed to students on the basis of financial need.

⇒ Student Assistance Commission budget requests and Board of Higher Education budget recommendations for student financial aid have placed emphasis on need-based aid programs, particularly the Monetary Award Program (MAP). In each year since fiscal year 1995, the Governor and General Assembly have endorsed the proposed level of financial aid funding.

⇒ Since fiscal year 1995, state general funds support for MAP, the state's largest need-based student financial aid program, has increased by $68.9 million, or 28.8 percent. State general funds appropriations of $308.6 million in fiscal year 1999 represent an increase of $28.3 million, or 10.1 percent, over prior year appropriations. New state general funds made available for MAP since fiscal year 1995 represent 84 percent of all new resources appropriated for student financial aid programs administered by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

⇒ Funding for a new program, Illinois Incentive for Access (IIA), was provided in fiscal year 1997. IIA provides grants of up to $500 for freshmen students who have no family resources to pay costs for attending a college or university. IIA grants supplement MAP grants and may be used to pay for educational expenses such as books and supplies. A state appropriation of $8.5 million will support these grants in fiscal year 1999.

⇒ Nationally and in Illinois, borrower indebtedness has grown faster for graduate students than any other class level and is nearly double that of the average indebtedness of students classified as seniors. Enhancing state financial aid for undergraduate students should help students find graduate education more affordable. This will be especially important as graduate and professional education becomes necessary for employment in critical professions.

2. The Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission shall review programs that are not based on financial need to determine whether the purpose of these programs has been achieved, develop alternative means for achieving these purposes, and reallocate funds to need-based programs.

⇒ Pursuant to a request of the Legislative Audit Commission, the Office of the Auditor General conducted a compliance audit of tuition and fee waiver programs. Both the Board and Commission staffs have provided information to assist with this compliance audit and public universities have begun to develop policies and procedures to address the audit findings.

⇒ The Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission plan to complete a comprehensive review of non-need based programs in order to assess whether each program is achieving its statutory purpose and whether it should be revised or restructured to better meet legislative intent. In the course of that review, consideration will also be given to the role non-need based programs have in increasing enrollment of underrepresented groups in postsecondary education.

3. The Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and colleges, universities, and their governing boards should make every effort to ensure that all potential students, particularly minority and low income students and their families, receive information about the availability of financial aid.

⇒ In fiscal year 1996, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission created Higher EdNet, a financial aid clearinghouse, providing Illinois residents with a single source for information regarding student financial aid, academic preparation for postsecondary education, school selection and career planning. Since fiscal year 1996, the Commission has processed nearly 21,000 requests for this service. The Commission has initiated a program providing on-line access to the service, free of charge, to high schools, colleges, universities and libraries.

⇒ ISAC produces a variety of informational brochures and publications on student financial aid programs and the need to plan to meet college costs. The Commission distributed approximately 1.5 million of these informational items during fiscal year 1997. In the 1996-97 school year, ISAC conducted outreach seminars and provided publications at more than 30 schools, reaching more than 7,000 students.

⇒ ISAC plans to continue working with financial aid organizations such as the Illinois Association of College Admission Counselors (IACAC) and the Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (ILASFAA) to conduct financial aid awareness activities. ISAC plans to offer additional Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion opportunities designed to help student and families complete their FAFSA and access any available aid. ISAC has created a new advisory committee of high school counselors that should provide useful insight and guidance on a variety of issues, including methods to serve minority and low-income students and their families.

4. Students and their families should be encouraged to plan ahead to pay for their college education. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission and colleges and universities should present information to students and their families about their expected contributions and projected Pell and Monetary Award Program awards based on financial profiles.

⇒ Legislation creating a prepaid tuition program was approved by the Governor and General Assembly during fall 1997. Through this new initiative, Illinois families will be able to purchase prepaid tuition contracts that are guaranteed to cover the future cost of tuition and mandatory fees at either Illinois public universities or community colleges. The program is intended to offer Illinois residents an accessible and understandable way to save for college. ISAC anticipates offering initial contracts in the fall of 1998.

⇒ *The ISAC INFO Café* Internet site includes information on how to apply for financial aid; federal and state grant, scholarship, and loan programs; academic preparation, college selections, and admission; and planning for college costs. The site features several online financial aid calculators. The calculators let users enter information about their unique financial circumstances and instantly determine their projected contributions, amount to be saved, possible grant aid, and expected total educational costs.

⇒ ISAC continues to administer the Bonus Incentive Grant (BIG) program as a supplement to the Illinois College Savings Bond program. BIG grants provide an additional financial incentive for purchase of College Savings Bonds. The most recent bond sale was October 20-23, 1997.

⇒ ISAC plans to promote maximum participation in the state's new prepaid tuition program. Efforts will be made to identify the most effective ways to persuade families that affordable, manageable college savings plans exist and can be utilized.

⇒ ISAC will evaluate the Illinois College Accounts Network (ICAN), a savings program which is intended to make it easier for families to finance higher education. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if the program should be changed, repackaged, or remarketed in light of recent changes in tax codes and other college savings and payment options.

5. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission and colleges and universities should simplify the application and need evaluation processes and coordinate the administration of state student financial aid programs with federal, institutional, and private programs.

⇒ ISAC staff provided testimony and comments to the Department of Education this past summer on proposed changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). ISAC supported several proposed changes that would simplify the application process and opposed some proposed changes that would have required the creation of an additional Illinois-specific financial aid application. A second financial aid application would make it more difficult for Illinois families to apply for financial aid.

⇒ ISAC continues to move MAP delivery into an electronic environment by expanding the Alternative Delivery Process (ADP). The purpose of the ADP is to make the delivery and administration of MAP simpler for the participating schools and more understandable for students. Currently, 20 institutions participate in MAP-ADP. ADP allows participating schools to calculate MAP eligibility, make award announcements, and request payment at the institutional level within parameters established by the Commission. ADP avoids duplicative award notifications to students from both ISAC and the student's institution and allows an individual student's award to be more easily processed by his or her school. Additional institutions are expected to participate beginning in 1998.

⇒ ISAC continues to work with colleges and universities to reengineer its scholarship and grant programs with the intention of enhancing program operations and making program administration simpler for all involved parties. One of the most significant changes has involved efforts to make the internal rules ISAC uses to administer its programs consistent from program to program. Other changes include developing common deadline dates for the Minority Teachers of Illinois and DeBolt Teacher Shortage Scholarship programs and development of common data elements and common electronic formats for data bases for all scholarship and grant programs.

⇒ ISAC plans to fund borrower education, debt management, and loan default education efforts and to support multi-agency initiatives aimed at facilitating loan default prevention and rewarding consistent loan repayment records.

⇒ ISAC will continue agency efforts to simplify and streamline the financial aid delivery system through initiatives such as program and systems integration, electronic delivery, and expanded use of the Internet.

6. The Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission shall monitor the impact of federal programs and institutional grant programs upon state programs and advocate changes in federal programs when they affect the administration or distribution of state student financial aid.

⇒ ISAC has been heavily involved in monitoring federal student loan policy and has taken the lead regarding the collective guaranty agency response to recently proposed changes to the Federal Family Education Loan Program. ISAC's input to the Department of Education has been instrumental in charting the course of federal policy changes and will ensure that the new guidelines and regulations continue to allow ISAC to meet the needs of Illinois students and families.

⇒ ISAC and IBHE continue to monitor the reauthorization of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965. Staff will undertake analysis of proposals that affect Title IV programs and provide information to the Commission, the Board, to state lawmakers, and to the Illinois congressional delegation about the impact such proposals might have on Illinois student aid.

⇒ ISAC plans to monitor the impact of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, which includes the Hope Scholarship Tax Credit and the Lifetime Learning Tax Credit to determine what changes, if any, may be advisable in Illinois student aid programs in order to benefit low-income students and to encourage college savings.

⇒ ISAC plans to continue to provide input to the Federal Government and policy groups regarding the impact of changes in the Pell Grant Program on Illinois students.

7. Colleges and universities are encouraged to use institutional grants to promote retention of first and second year students and to reduce dependence upon loans, particularly for students who are academically at risk. The Illinois Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission shall examine the feasibility and impact of reallocating student financial aid resources to provide larger grants to first and second year students to promote retention and reduce loan burdens.

⇒ The Illinois Incentive for Access (IIA) Program will be in its third year of operation this fall. IIA was created to "front load" grant aid, providing first-time freshmen who have no expected family contribution for college expenses with a one-time $500 grant. Over 18,500 freshmen received IIA awards in 1996-1997 and over 19,000 received awards in 1997-1998.

⇒ A detailed evaluation of the IIA program, its effectiveness, and its delivery is currently in progress and is expected to be completed by ISAC for the General Assembly in 1999. At that point, recommendations will be made regarding any changes to the program including whether the program should be expanded to cover costs beyond tuition and fees for additional students.

8. Colleges and universities should evaluate all admission and operations procedures to ensure that such procedures do not impose unnecessary financial hardship nor discourage access for the neediest students.

⇒ ISAC continues to promote electronic transactions between schools and lenders, which are designed to speed up the approval and disbursement processes for student financial aid. Currently, 35 schools and 124 lenders participate in ISAC's Single Point of Contact Electronic Funds Transfer (SPOC/EFT) program.

⇒ In the process of reviewing its program operations, ISAC will consider whether its financial aid administrative procedures can be restructured to overcome other barriers to enrollment faced by the neediest students and by traditionally under represented student groups.

⇒ ISAC will monitor federal student aid policy and support IBHE policy regarding the integration of distance learning into postsecondary education. Once state policy is established, ISAC will assess the need to revamp student aid program policy and operational procedures to support the delivery of financial aid to distance learning students.

9. An Illinois resident, enrolled at least half time and attending an Illinois college or university, should be eligible to receive a Monetary Award. Students at proprietary institutions that grant degrees should be eligible for a Monetary Award.

⇒ Legislation to extend consideration for MAP awards to students attending IBHE-approved proprietary schools at which the majority of students are enrolled in degree-granting programs was signed by the Governor in 1997. Funds were included in budget recommendations for fiscal year 1998 and fiscal year 1999 to begin phase-in of eligibility. Over 1,300 freshmen in two proprietary schools, DeVry Institute of Technology and Midstate College, are expected to receive awards in academic year 1997-98.

10. The Monetary Award Program should support tuition and fee costs. Aid should be awarded according to student need and resources. Students should be eligible for a Monetary Award for five years of full-time or 10 years of half-time study.

⇒ ISAC's current rules and policies allow for MAP awards only for tuition and fee costs. MAP award decisions are based on student need, taking into account college costs and family resources of program applicants. The award criteria are adjusted and reviewed using a formal committee process to ensure the appropriate students are being served. Funding recommendations for MAP include sufficient funds to ensure that students with very limited resources and no expected family contribution can receive awards for full tuition and fees.

11. The Monetary Award Program maximum award should increase annually at a rate that is consistent with reasonable increases in student tuition and fees. In making its annual recommendations for the maximum award, the Board of Higher Education should consider public and private tuition and fee increases, trends in instructional costs, and factors associated with students' ability to pay.

⇒ Annual increases in the MAP maximum award have been made since fiscal year 1995. The maximum award for the 1998-99 school year will be $4,320, although the maximum award continues to lose ground as a percentage of average tuition and fees at private institutions.

12. Application deadlines established for the Monetary Award Program should seek to facilitate student access.

⇒ Funding was provided in fiscal year 1999 to extend the priority processing guidelines from June 1 to July 1 for full-year MAP awards to continuing students. This deadline extension is intended to promote student access as well as increase student retention.

⇒ Input from the ILASFAA Formula Committee, a student focus group, and a student survey are being reviewed to assess the feasibility and appropriateness of further changes to MAP processing guidelines in order to facilitate maximum student access.

13. The Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, with the assistance of colleges and universities, shall use various means to evaluate the benefits and program costs of providing aid to students enrolled less than half-time.

⇒ In September 1996, ISAC completed a study entitled "Characteristics of Students Who are Enrolled on a Less-Than-Half-Time Basis During the Spring of 1995." The study provides information on the financial situations and personal conditions of students enrolled on a less-than-half-time basis.

⇒ In July 1998, ISAC staff conducted a focus group with financial aid administrators from institutions with less-than-half-time students to gain insight on their perspective of the state's role in providing assistance to these students.

Keeping Costs Affordable

Colleges' and universities' tuition decisions should support the following statewide goals:

- to foster participation in and reduce barriers to higher education;

- to assist students and families in planning and saving to meet higher education costs; and

- to ensure that decisions about tuition and fee levels are included in planning and budget development at the campus, system, and state levels.

Recommendations, Implementation Status, and Planned Initiatives

1. Governing boards, colleges, and universities should develop, and annually update, four-year plans for tuition and fees. In developing these plans, institutions should consider multiple factors such as students' ability to pay, inflationary indicators, instructional costs, and institutional resource needs. Planned changes in tuition and fees should be announced and published a year in advance of implementation so that students and families have time to prepare to meet increased costs.

⇒ Several public universities have developed multi-year tuition and fee plans. There are major differences among the plans that have been adopted by the various boards. For example, the plan adopted by the Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees delineates tuition, fee and room and board rates for four years, is updated annually, and limits annual increases to increases in the Consumer Price Index. Western Illinois University has adopted a guaranteed four-year rate for tuition, fees, room, and board for freshmen entering in summer 1999 and after. The plan calls for these costs to be fixed for a four-year period. Illinois State University limits annual increases to changes in per capita disposable income, and Governors State University limits increases to 2 percentage points above the Consumer Price Index. Chicago State University and Northern Illinois University also have adopted four-year tuition plans.

⇒ The Board may wish to encourage institutions, that are not already doing so, link annual changes in tuition and fees and room and board rates an economic indicator, such as the Consumer Price Index or per capita disposable income.

2. Governing boards for public institutions should include tuition rate changes and the resulting revenue changes in their annual state budget requests to the Board of Higher Education. Fee increases should also be reported with the budget request so that they may be considered in developing recommendations for student financial aid programs.

⇒ Governing boards have accelerated their review of tuition and fee increases, and included the resulting revenue changes in their state budget requests to the Board of Higher Education.

3. Governing boards should not create any new fees to finance instructional activities and should consult with students when increasing noninstructional fees. Governing boards should submit any proposal that includes new fees for noninstructional purposes or significantly restructures existing fee programs for review by a student advisory committee and to a student referendum. Colleges and universities should make every effort to ensure that a sufficient number of students participate in any referendum concerning new fees or restructured fee programs so that the vote accurately reflects student opinion. Institutions should not shift costs from General Revenue funds, tuition, and other revenue sources to student fees.

⇒ Many public universities have submitted their proposals that include fees for noninstructional purposes to review by a student advisory committee and to a student referendum. However, not all have followed this practice, and they should be reminded of the importance of this policy and the need to keep costs affordable for students.

4. Governing boards should examine how institutions can reduce reliance upon fees as a revenue source. The Board of Higher Education, working with colleges and universities and governing boards, should examine the nature and scope of student fees and consider alternative methods of maximizing benefits and reducing fee costs.

⇒ Mandatory student fees have increased by 15 percent between fiscal years 1996 and 1998. This recommendation deserves further attention by public university governing boards.

5. The Board of Higher Education, in consultation with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission and colleges and universities, shall examine the utility and feasibility of collecting additional information to support decisions on tuition and fees and student financial aid, including information on family income of students attending colleges and universities and costs of instruction at all types of institutions.

⇒ Additional work on the part of the staffs of the Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and colleges and universities is necessary to collect additional information on family income and instructional costs. Costs of collecting the information will be weighed against potential benefits for both institutions and agencies.

6. The Board of Higher Education shall annually publish and distribute to Illinois colleges, universities, and governing boards a report on college affordability. This report should present analyses of trends in tuition and fees, students' ability to pay, instructional costs, state support, and other information relevant to the setting of tuition and fee rates.

⇒ The Board has prepared and distributed a report that includes analyses of trends in tuition and fees, students' ability to pay, instructional costs, state support and other information relevant to the setting of tuition and fees. These reports have been prepared and distributed annually in July.

7. Undergraduate, graduate, and professional tuition rates for out-of-state students at Illinois public universities should approximate instructional costs in a university system. The most recent annual Discipline Cost Study shall be the basis for determining instructional cost.